

recorded. Christianity has failed to raise mankind, for its ideal God was a capricious, revengeful, limited being. Without pure ideals man can never progress. His potentialities remain unknown to him, and the purpose of life is degraded to the materialistic pursuits of business, pleasure, or crime. Were we to teach our children the secret powers of pure idealism, the apparent impossibilities of Utopia would become realities. I claim that to the gross ideals inculcated by the Christian religion, as expounded, is directly due the debasement and wickedness of its votaries.

To assert that the doctrine is infallible merely on traditional grounds would be as reasonable as the revival of the old fallacy of the earth's shape—a fallacy, be it noted, ably supported by the rack and the stake—worthy types alike of the meek and lowly Jesus and the doctrine of eternal punishment. However old may be tradition concerning the manner of such punishment, no one at the present day should believe the doctrine true simply on such authority. If the tradition was simply that eternal punishment would be meted out to the wicked irrespective of the "Devil" it might be different; but the Christians, misinterpreting their Sacred Book, have interwoven with tradition the "Devil," "Satan," "Beelzebub," and kindred terms for the antithesis of God until their theology is a mass of error and corruption, and the enlightenment of the people, the freedom of thought, and the finding of the key to the sacred Scriptures now compels the elimination from the Christian theology of much hitherto devotedly believed. Any name expressing contempt, pity, or threatening punishment from God is too good in their eyes by which to call those who dare to think for themselves. Their Sacred Book is to them a meaningless jumble, for they throw away the key. They have no conception of the true meaning of the names or terms they apply to that scapegoat of theirs, the "Devil."

Taking up the assumption of the Christians that eternal punishment is a synonymous term for "retribution," we find it but a travesty on the natural principle of repetition, due wholly to the degraded and distorted imaginations of the fanatics of 1,800 years ago. By the exercise of a little ingenuity, the

Roman church inserted "purgatory," and from this they derive a handsome revenue and a powerful support, finding in it a formidable ally to the doctrine of eternal damnation. Why should the thoughts of the people of to-day be trammelled with the absurd absurdities of fanaticism? Who made the "churches" our keepers? These are the questions asked by intelligent men and women, and the old hackneyed phrase is the only reply given by Christianity—"We must not enquire into the inscrutable mysteries of God!"

The doctrine of the Trinity was introduced with bloodshed and rapine, and amid the turbulent crowd of murders and outlaws of the times, unscrupulous men declared they had received orders from heaven for any non-sense they desired to promulgate. Revelation upon revelation was reported and believed by a crowd of effeminate men, crazed with religious excitement, and to this era is traceable the ignoble beliefs of Christians—be they Papist or Protestant. Nothing asserted to have been "revealed" at that time was too extravagant, too absurd, for general belief, especially when the descendants of "St." Peter scrupled not to use arguments more forcible than loving or Christ-like.

No doctrine which teaches of a revengeful God is worthy of thought. That only is fit for promulgation which leads us onward, upward, inward, refining, ennobling, emancipating, teaching the equality of women, the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. God is love, now, as ever. Natural laws must not be confounded with the distorted imaginations of bigots, and no doctrine, however traditional, should find credence if it does not show a perfect freedom on the part of man, embracing the white and the black alike. That which embraces the whole universe is of good; but that which selects a favored few for divine favors is of Antichrist. The doctrine of the Christians is a selfish, unreasonable dogmatism, and giving untold opportunities for the exercise of hypocrisy and wickedness. Yet the bible contains that knowledge which, when extracted, will raise mankind as far above their present sinful condition as the stars are above the earth and leads us to a real participation in the joy emanating from the Great Father—Mother, the Supreme Good, to whom be reverence and glory.

A. M.

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